

Chapter 5—

What does it mean to live in a project area?

Living in a project area means that as redevelopment of the area progresses, you will see gradual improvements. Keep in mind that redevelopment is not a hasty process. Each change to an area is made with consideration for the legal rights of the residents and for the economic development of the area.

Rest assured that as residents of the area you will not be immediately displaced from your home. And your favorite local store will not be immediately torn down and turned into a shopping center. You have a voice in what happens in your area. And if you play an active role in the process, as many community members do, you can help shape the direction of your own community.

How will my neighborhood be affected by redevelopment?

Redevelopment is a means of improving neighborhoods. The following examples are a partial list of improvements that could be made in your neighborhood:

- ◆ Streets landscaped with trees, shrubs, and flowers;
- ◆ Sidewalks, drainage facilities, gutters and curbs installed;
- ◆ Alleys paved, improved, and repaired;
- ◆ Through traffic on residential streets reduced;
- ◆ Street lighting improved;
- ◆ Loans and grants for rehabilitation of homes made available;
- ◆ Neighborhood parks, community centers, greenbelts and bike paths constructed; and
- ◆ Buffers created between conflicting land uses.

How long do I have to wait to see improvements from redevelopment?

Redevelopment will not occur overnight. It takes hard work and active citizen participation. Many people are anxious to see the first shovel full of dirt turned, the first decaying building cleared, and the first signs of new construction and rehabilitation of buildings take place. However, redevelopment agencies know that careful planning and proper phasing of development are critical to a successful plan. Hasty development or approval of ineffective projects can actually delay the full benefits of redevelopment and can hamper future efforts.

It is essential to make the right choices so that the objectives of the redevelopment plan and the community goals can be achieved. The implementation of the redevelopment program is an essential element of the agency's annual budget process. Therefore, only redevelopment projects that are approved as part of the annual budget will be undertaken during the budget year.

Many redevelopment projects are designed to be completed within one to two years. However, projects are typically broken down into phases. And each phase has its own nuances and challenges that can sometimes result in the projects taking much longer.

Will I have a voice in what happens to my neighborhood?

Yes. Because each neighborhood has different goals and needs, the people who reside, own property, or have a business should participate in decisions affecting their families and lifestyles. Without their participation, there can be no plan that will fit their needs and desires. Agencies encourage citizen participation in several ways including:

- ◆ Serving on neighborhood committees;
- ◆ Attending community forums;
- ◆ Speaking at public hearings;
- ◆ Writing letters to the governing body;
- ◆ Signing a petition; or
- ◆ Serving on a formal project area committee.

Citizen involvement in the PAC can be an important way to maintain support for the project and keep the residents informed about the progress of the project.

Active participation by interested citizens will ensure that:

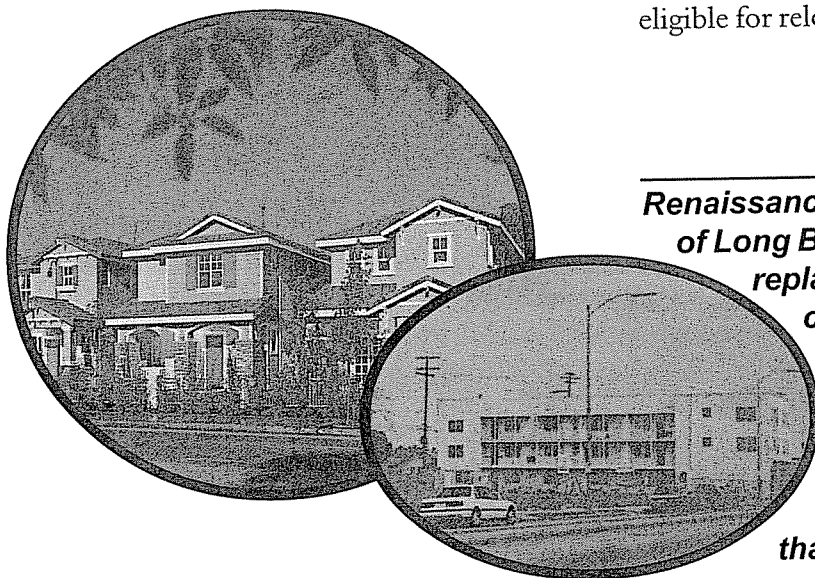
- ◆ Community and neighborhood interests and needs are considered;

- ◆ The residents and property owners will share in the benefits flowing from redevelopment activities;
- ◆ The residents and property owners will participate in the decision-making process affecting their neighborhood; and
- ◆ The residents and owners are aware of, and informed about, the redevelopment process and activities.

If I live in a redevelopment project area, does that mean that I will lose my home and have to leave?

No. Simply living in a redevelopment project area does not mean that you will be forced to move. Typically, redevelopment improves an area so that you and your neighbors will enjoy your neighborhood more.

Agencies rarely acquire homes through eminent domain. However, any property that is acquired through eminent domain is paid for at a fair price, which is typically the current appraised rate for the property. Rest assured that if your home were to be redeveloped, the agency would have to go through a set of rigorous procedures designed to protect your interests. You would also likely be eligible for relocation benefits.



Renaissance Walk (developed by the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency) replaced blocks of deteriorating conditions, vacant lots and substandard housing(below). Now the area boasts 40 three- and four-bedroom single family homes and a community child care center that supports up to 65 children.